

BOSTON RECORD

And Religious Telegraph.

NATHANIEL WILLIS AND ASA RAND, PROPRIETORS AND EDITORS...CONGRESS-STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

NO. 30...VOL. XIII.

FRIDAY, JULY 25, 1828.

Terms \$3, in 6 mo. or \$2.50 in adv.

RELIGIOUS.

VALIDITY OF UNITARIAN BAPTISM.

Unitarians generally administer the ordinance of Baptism in the words of the formula given by our Saviour, and uniformly used by orthodox clergymen. Some have employed only the word "Father," or "God," while others have informed their congregations that they should perform that rite, or entirely omit it, agreeably to the wishes of the candidate. I shall not attempt to decide which of the three classes is the more consistent with itself, or to decipher what significance they attach to either mode. My mind is somewhat perplexed in regard to the propriety and validity of Baptism administered in any form by a Unitarian clergyman.

It is but an external rite, I am aware, and not absolutely essential to salvation; yet it is indispensable to membership of Christ's visible kingdom, and cannot be omitted without violation of the rules of that kingdom. It is a mere sign or badge of such membership; yet the badge should be put on, & so put on as the Scriptures require.

Do Unitarian clergymen, in truth, affix this badge? I inquire with reference particularly to those who use the prescribed formula; for that the others do not, is obvious. Is the person over whom the sacred name, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," has been pronounced by a Unitarian, in connexion with the application of water, scripturally baptized? I make the inquiry in the tenderness and anxiety of a wounded spirit, which needs relief.

I may be told that some orthodox ministers have been unprincipled men, and have disgraced themselves, and dishonored their Master by crime, and been expelled from the ministry; but the validity of baptism by them has never been questioned. I feel no hesitation myself in regard to a case of this nature. The badge is actually put on, in the significance of its scriptural meaning; for he who applied it, although a bad man, believed that he said in pronouncing the consecrated formula; he understood the words of it as Christ designed he should. He affixed the very thing, which Christ commanded. His guilt does not remove it.

But the Unitarian Clergyman does not profess to attach the meaning to the formula which we suppose Christ attached to it. By the words, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," we suppose is conveyed the sentiment that the triune Jehovah is designated; and in this meaning we suppose the validity of the ceremony rests. If he baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and mean by it God, an exalted man, and an attribute of God; and we use the same words, but mean God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, surely he affixes a very different badge from that used by us. Is his Gospel sign of membership in Christ's kingdom?

It will afford me unfeigned gratification to see this question answered in your valuable paper. E. H.

SPECIMEN OF UNITARIAN INTERPRETATION.

"The grand remuneration of Christianity is an eternal life of happiness. Its punishments of disobedience are made peculiarly dreadful by being threatened in indefinite language." Christian Examiner, No. 1. p. 34.

There are two respects in which this statement is incorrect. In the first place, if the "punishments of disobedience" threatened in the gospel, are "threatened in indefinite language," as here asserted, it by no means follows that they are, by the Unitarian, made peculiarly dreadful. On the contrary, they are made less dreadful. The great body of the Unitarian who believe the language of the scriptures on this subject to imply eternal duration. If now it is indefinite in its import, it allows room for hope that the punishment will be something less than eternal. It, therefore, diminishes the dreadfulness of what is threatened. It leaves the gospel a less powerful instrument to operate upon the fears of men. It renders the "terrors of the Lord," by which, in part, the apostle would "persuade men" to reconciliation, of less efficacy in accomplishing the important object.

But, in the second place, the assertion that the punishments of the gospel are "threatened in indefinite language," is not true. I will adduce but a single passage in confirmation of my remark. MATTHEW 25. 46. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous shall go into life eternal." In the original, *eis kolasis aionios*, *eis zoes aionios*. Into eternal punishment—into eternal life. Why shall not the word eternal mean as much in the one connection as in the other? Why shall it be said that in the one case its meaning is definite, and in the other indefinite, when there is no shadow of reason for such an assertion, and when every circumstance connected with the passage demands that its import in both cases be the same? Numerous other passages might be adduced as examples of what is here illustrated. The language of scripture is, in general, as definite, and as clear, and as extensive in its import, respecting the future punishment of the wicked, as respecting the future reward of the righteous. Adopt a principle which gives limits to the former, and you limit the latter likewise. They are both of the same duration. And as life is confessedly eternal, so must punishment be eternal.

Now will a candid community be persuaded to trust in a religion which must be supported by such sophistry, and false exegesis, as are exhibited in the above quotation? If there is a set of men who wish to sink the Bible into indefiniteness and darkness, in order that they may exalt into its place a system of their own, more congenial to the feelings of an unhumiliated heart, will those who wish a sure foundation for eternity follow them in their delusive speculations? Whatever sophistry, or false interpretation, may here be employed, God will, at the judgment, restore his word to its right meaning. And by that RIGHT MEANING his creatures shall stand or fall. Those who resist it, shall go into ETERNAL PUNISHMENT: those who are conformed to it, into ETERNAL LIFE. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

MINISTERS.

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." No doubt these inspired words of Paul are often made the foundation of animated and powerful

appeals to the hearts and consciences of men from the pulpit. Would not these appeals have more effect, if ministers themselves felt and manifested more of that holy self-denial which the apostle here inculcates? It appears to me Messrs. Editors, that the whole controversy in regard to a minister's travelling on the Sabbath in his exchanges, may be quickly put to rest on the above principle. Whether it be lawful or unlawful for him thus to travel, there can be no question but that it does give offence, and great offence. Good people are grieved to see it; and many do and will take occasion from it to justify themselves in travelling for secular purposes. Now it will not be denied, I think, that so far as means are concerned, almost the whole burden of carrying onward the great and good work of restoring the sacredness to this day of God through our land, rests on the ministers of the sanctuary. They, in one united phalanx, are to follow on this subject from the pulpit and the press, and by their influence and example, until the glorious work of reformation is accomplished. Will they not now as a body be willing to endure a little self-denial in their individual and family concerns, even if it be on the ground of expediency, a stronger hand, and greater effect? I once thought it unlawful in ordinary cases to travel eight or ten miles for an exchange on the Sabbath, and therefore abstained from it. I now think it lawful, situated as I am with a family, but inexpedient; and yet I do not feel myself at all relieved from the obligation, not to travel on the Sabbath. Nor shall I, so long as by travelling I should cause my brethren to offend.

Have ministers yet to learn that the eye of public scrutiny follows them at home and abroad, in public and private? This results naturally and necessarily from the fact, that as a body, they stand in the front rank against the powers of darkness. Now it does not appear whether the "grey-headed clergyman," seen at the bar of the Exchange Coffee-House on the day of the "Congregational Convention," filled his glass with lemonade, beer, wine, or strong drink; though it is intimated that it was with "wine-bitters." Nor does it appear what was the state of his health at the time; whether or not he was weary and faint, and "ready to perish," and therefore entitled to "strong drink;" but it was certainly unfortunate that he was seen there at all. If it was merely to allay his thirst with undiluted drink, it had better been taken some where else. If it was to remove some severe pain, by means of diluted alcohol, it had better been at the apothecary's shop, under the direction of a physician. If it was merely to gratify—but I cannot indulge any such suspicion of a venerable father in the ministry.

Again, I would ask, do not ministers know that they are watched? And do they not often exert their hearers to avoid the very appearance of evil? Not long since a clergyman, who is distinguished for faithful dealing in the pulpit, and who had become especially obnoxious to the intemperate and all the enemies of reform, was passing through an adjoining town on an exchange (Sabbath) and being somewhat indisposed, he refreshed himself with half a glass of spirits. The deed, which would have been justified in almost any other person and passed off without notice, was immediately reported from the bar and sent on the wings of the wind in every direction; and came back to the parish of the reverend brother, to the no small injury of his influence in the suppression of intemperance. If there is any class of men that ought to be above reproach, it is those who minister at the altar. I know that ministers are men and subject to like passions with others; but the fact should cause them to redouble their watchfulness. Let them remember that there are things which may be lawful, but which to them as ministers are highly inexpedient. A.

SABBATH BREAKING.

While there is so much doing to promote the better observance of the Sabbath, I am told, you and I verily believe it, that in Massachusetts—yes old Massachusetts—Ministers of the Gospel run stages on the Sabbath.

And now, Messrs. Editors, I will tell you how I came by this information. Not long since, I called on a very respectable stage proprietor and agent, to converse with him about the sin of Sabbath-breaking. I found him a PROFESSOR OF RELIGION, and yet justifying himself in carrying the mail on the Sabbath, and running as many extras as passengers who came in his line required, because it was necessary, &c. And as a salo to a half awakened conscience, he said Mr. —, a professor of religion is a director of the line, and ministers of the Gospel are stockholders. Now if this professor has told me the truth, and if a man is accountable for what he does by his servant, then I repeat that ministers of the gospel in Massachusetts run stages, and carry the mail, and all the passengers on their line, on the holy Sabbath of the Lord.

I wish you would publish this, as I want to see every man in the community awake to this subject; and I have no idea of screening the guilty, whether he be a humble stage driver, or steamboat servant, or one of the ennobled priesthood.

IT IS ONE THING TO RESOLVE—ANOTHER TO PERFORM.

The truth of this maxim is readily seen by all; and we think it equally true that a resolution is worth nothing, unless the spirit of the resolution is carried into effect. And no man should feel that his obligations are discharged, simply by a resolution to discharge those obligations. A resolution is no more than a recognition of our duty, and a solemn promise to perform it. And in this light should the friends of the Bible view their resolutions to supply the poor and the destitute with the bread of life.

It is delightful to witness the efforts that are making to dispel the moral darkness, by sending forth light and truth, not only into every country, but into every family and every heart. This is a glorious work, in which all may and ought to engage with their might. And who does not love to anticipate the happy results of this labor of love? It will not only cause the blind and ignorant in our own country to see the light and understand the truth which is able to save their souls, but it will give new strength to all the other benevolent enterprises which so signally characterize the present day.

When the destitute at home have been supplied; when they have seen the light and rejoiced in it; they will have hearts to feel and to pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom all over

the earth. And with their prayers and their tears, they will cast their "mites" into the treasury of the Lord. Such motives, independent of the great command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," should take fast hold, and produce a lasting conviction in every Christian heart.

And we cannot reasonably expect these fruits, unless the seed is sown,—unless the Bible is circulated,—unless these good resolutions are carried into effect. And is it not as easy to do this speedily, as to defer it till near the close of the year? At the end of the year, let not the enemy triumph because the work is not accomplished. But let the same promptness and zeal, which characterize the resolutions, also characterize their execution. But how shall this be effected? Experience shows that the most expedient and efficient method is, to appoint suitable agents, who shall go to every house, ask every family whether they have the Bible, solicit donations wherever they go, and, as far as time and opportunity will allow, assemble the people and address them on this subject. Pursuing this plan, it can be known when the work is done; and in most cases, the agents will collect more than enough money to cover all expenses. A want of funds, therefore can be no excuse for delaying the work. Besides, this thorough course will cause those who have the Bible to value it more, and to feel more deeply for those who are destitute of this inestimable treasure. "Be not weary in well-doing: nor defer till to-morrow what should be done to-day. Freely ye received, freely give." The good of society, the prosperity of Zion, and the glory of God, call for speedy, united, untiring zeal and action, in feeding the starving souls of the thousands around us with the bread of eternal life. H. D.

CLERICAL MEMORIAL.

From the Vermont Chronicle.

LEAVES OF A MINISTER'S JOURNAL. Since I have been a minister of the Gospel, I have been enabled to understand more distinctly and fully than formerly, what the apostle Paul meant by the statement, "We are fools for Christ's sake." I once made a slight mistake in describing a tool, which I supposed might be required for a mechanical operation, when a joiner quoted from the lips of a neighboring lawyer the following sage observation: "Ministers have all kind of sense except common sense." And quite sure I am, that the instructions, which I give my people on many important points, lose much of their natural weight and influence through the apprehension, generally cherished, that as a minister I do not, and what is more, cannot understand such matters. If I urge a farmer to "redeem the time," to give his business such a form and pursue it in such a method, as to save a few hours every week, for engagements strictly and appropriately religious, he carelessly dismisses all thought on the subject by saying: Ah, you are not a farmer! If I entreat my hearers to consecrate themselves to God—to inscribe "Holiness to the Lord" on all their possessions, as their "chief end" to glorify His name and promote His cause: one and another are ready to say in reply: that course may answer for a minister! When I ask my people to contribute liberally to the substance of which a gracious God has given them for religious purposes, and assure them, that in so doing, they will be promoting their own true interests, my exhortation is met with the sentiment in many a bosom: just so much do you know about the matter! What do you know of the value of money; and the various means, which must be employed to obtain it? It is interesting to mark some of the causes, to which the apprehension, that ministers are incompetent to form a judgment and to give advice respecting the transactions of this life, may be owing.

1. Their refusal to adopt maxims of worldly policy is "proof positive" in the mind of many, that they lack common sense. O, say one, that our minister was better acquainted with human nature! He would not, then, inculcate truths, which he might know would give offence to Judge K. and Col. B.—two as respectable and influential members of the society contains."

2. Their readiness to yield their rights in pecuniary matters. "I have received five cents a bushel for my apples," said farmer R. "when I get the money; but in common kind of pay, two shillings. I guess you must allow me two shillings on my minister's tax for those I brought you, the other day." "What did you get for the pork, you carried parson M. yesterday, neighbor F?" "Six dollars the hundred." "How; that is a dollar, or a dollar and a half above the market price." "I don't care; it is as good as that rate, as his preaching; and he dare not dispute the price." True, he did not dispute the price; but he knew the wretch was wronging him; and chose rather to yield his right than to seem anxious about pecuniary matters.

3. Their poverty. But I would gladly inquire of some of our "worldly wise men." How happens it, that a class of men, taken from every various station and employment; with minds of very different order; and subject to every variety of discipline, should all at once lose their "common sense" by becoming the ministers of the omniscient God? Some of them had been very successfully engaged in worldly business, and others, when driven by ill health to abandon the ministry, have found no uncommon difficulty in rising to high stations of affluence and honor.—Let any one study the history of the puritans, especially the puritans of New England.—Were their ministers, whose influence upon the community around them was very powerful, injudicious counsellors, even in worldly matters? Look at Dr. Witherspoon in the continental congress. A wiser and more useful statesman, that venerable body did not contain. Even with regard to the best method of supporting the army, he proved himself the wisest man, who ventured to offer advice. Ministers of the present day know, as well as others, the value of money—understand as well the best method of "transacting business." Let me, however be content, if it must be so, to be esteemed a fool for Christ's sake. Wisdom will one day be justified of all her children.

PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT.

It was said of Whitefield, that he considered it necessary to a devotional frame of mind, before entering the sanctuary, to retire into his closet and spend one hour in private meditation and devotion. Many pious ministers have done the same, and have felt that they could not preach or pray if they had not had the privilege. It is quite different with some preachers at this

day. They can spend a large portion of the Sabbath morning riding to a neighboring town. They can arrive at the congregation as assembling, give directions concerning themselves, their horses, carriages, &c. and go directly to the duties of the sanctuary. Com.

HOME MISSIONS.

For the Boston Recorder.

PERPLEXITY RELIEVED. Extract of a letter from a Missionary of the Massachusetts M. Society. The aid which the Massachusetts Missionary Society has generously afforded to the first church in B—, has been very gratefully received. They were destitute of a Pastor. They had listened to the instructions of one in whom they wished to "behold their teacher." But with what funds they could raise, and what aid they were receiving, they could not provide the necessary means for his support. It was to them a day of deep interest, of much prayer and supplication before God. He directed their eyes to the Massachusetts Missionary Society, and in your ears they told their distress. In the spirit of kindness you listened to their request; you extended to them the hand of charity, and thus removed the only insuperable obstacle to the consummation of their wishes—and now again they enjoy the regular labors of the Pastor of their choice.

This is a church of more than 70 members,—about 60 reside in B.; but the society is not large compared with the church. The church had long been happily united in the worship of God, in the year 1819, Mr. —, a Unitarian minister, was sent to them. I believe at first as a missionary, the church and society being without a Pastor. The people were pleased with him, and the church supposing him a Trinitarian, united with the society in requesting him to become their Pastor. But before his installation, they learned that he was a Unitarian, and refused to unite with the society in installing him, and earnestly remonstrated, when the Unitarian council met to install him. But the Council complied with the wishes of the society, and installed Mr. — without any church, the church having entered their protest, and withdrawn themselves as a body. The church then formed themselves into a Religious Society, and have since been continually increasing; and it gives me pleasure to state, that their increase has been greater this spring, than in any former year."

Remark.—Such "lording it over God's heritage" will meet with its merited rebuke, sooner or later. He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh, and have in derision all such attempts to put his church under the oppression of the enemy. The foregoing is but one of many instances in which the deceitful introduction of a Unitarian minister among a people, has been followed by a violent assault on the rights of the church in establishing him contrary to their wishes, corner of the truth at their own expense. The ignominy of the procedure however is so palpable to all minds not thoroughly initiated into Unitarian mysteries, that but a few years can pass away before the oppressed band of humble believers, looking steadily to God, will find their numbers fast augmenting and their strength increasing from the very ranks of those who had spoiled them. Such has been, and such doubtless will continue to be, the experience of churches enfeebled by such means. Their trials may be many and severe. Their sacrifices may be great. Their hopes may almost yield at times to despair. But faith and perseverance will insure them the victory.

Sacrifices of feeble churches for conscience sake.

"This church has struggled through many trials and hardships; but its members are still united and exerting themselves perhaps to the extent of their ability to support the Gospel. They, and the members of the society generally pay one per cent on the town valuation of all their property; and two thirds of the members of the church, residing in — have regularly organized themselves into a Corban Society, the members of which, both brethren and sisters, contribute six cents a week as a free will offering to God, for the support of the Gospel among themselves. This requires of many, much self-denial and personal sacrifice. It shows that they love the truth, and are striving together with one mind for its support. And I trust the time is not far distant, when this church instead of drawing from the treasury of the Lord, will begin to refund what she has received. Even now she is doing something by way of monthly concert, and other contributions; at least enough to manifest her good will to the general cause, and that her own trials do not absorb all her sympathies. In February, we formed a Tract Society auxiliary to the American Tract Society of Boston; and in March, aided in forming a County Bible Society, in which it was resolved not to relax exertions till every family in the county of W. is supplied with a copy of the word of life. In the whole county are but three settled ministers, except one Unitarian, who refuses to become a member of the Bible Society."

Query? Where lies the hope of the churches in New-England, if not in that spirit of sacrifice and self-denial which is displayed in this extract? And shall any of these feeble churches be left to sink for want of what they cannot supply themselves? S. A.

INTELLIGENCE.

EPISCOPALIANS IN ENGLAND.

The Rev. B. Allen, an Episcopalian of Philadelphia, now in Europe, has the following remarks respecting Churchmen in England, as he had found them after a few weeks' intercourse in London.

"In every conversation I have yet had on the subject, and I have had many with clergymen well informed, I am assured that what are known in America as High Church views are not tolerated in England. The notions of Mant, &c. concerning baptismal regeneration, and its correlate views, we know are held here by worldling men; but giving over dissenters to the uncorrupted mercies of God, and denying them to be a part of the true Church, are hardly known here. Of this, I was persuaded before. Now, my opinion is confirmed. I perceive the Church of England herself is Catholic in her views towards those who differ from her. An additional proof of this is found in the repeal of the test and corpor-

ation acts, which last night passed the House of Lords: the Bishops generally, not opposing.—Those who wish to know semi-popery, held by protestants, will find a larger measure of it in America than in England.

"I have heard three ministers of the Church of England, within two weeks, and they have preached extemporaneously. I have seen 40 ministers of the Church, within the same period, and they are friendly to the Bible Society. True, I have not sought for those who are afraid of the Bible going alone, but I am struck with the fact of my seeing so many in so short a time, who are friendly to the pure word. I pray their number may increase.

"Observing attentively pious ministers of the Church of England, I must say their standard of piety appears to be higher than ours in America. The choice spirits of the Church of England, are choice spirits indeed. I could live and die among them. There appears more of the love of holiness in their character than in the character of many highly esteemed on our side of the water."

Chr. Mag.

MORALS IN FRANCE.

In respect to the state of public morals here, there is doubtless a process of reform gradually going forward, in proportion as the true Gospel is suffered to exert its influence; but the mass to be operated upon is so prodigious, that nothing short of a considerable change can be perceptible. Here, as in other parts of France, the Sabbath is the principal day of amusement, both with Protestants and Catholics. Extreme levity, which is the well known national characteristic of the French, seems to give a complexion to their vices. Intemperance is certainly far less prevalent than in the United States; indeed I cannot say that I have seen an instance of gross intoxication since I have been in the country. Gambling is exceedingly prevalent, as I am informed, among all classes, as is profane cursing and swearing. The mind would sink under the contemplation of so much ignorance, delusion, and depravity, as is exhibited even in this single capital, were it not sustained by thinking of the omnipotence of that Divine Agent, who has only to breathe upon the valley of vision, and the dry bones live.—Sprague's Letters.

RELIGION IN MAINE.

Report of the General Conference, rendered at their meeting in Gorham, June 26th; abridged from the Christian Mirror.

[Concluded.] The Theological Seminary at Bangor is exerting a happy and increasing influence upon the surrounding region, besides raising up pastors for our starting churches. The last winter it furnished pious instructors for more than 1600 children and youth; and a very considerable number of hopeful conversions took place under their labors. About 14 Sabbath Schools are now conducted by as many students in the vicinity of Bangor, containing from 30 to 50 scholars each. Among the objects of special attention and effort with churches in different parts of the State, is the cause of Temperance. Never has so much good been done in this respect, as of late years. In what ratio the use of strong drink has been diminished; but it is so great, that in view of it, we cannot forbear exclaiming, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!" In this work hundreds and thousands have co-operated, who are not connected with the church.

Never too has so much been felt and done in regard to the duty of supplying with the word of God those families, who are destitute of the precious treasure. In a majority of the Counties has the resolution been adopted to provide the supply; and measures are in operation, which, with the blessing of God, will realize the accomplishment of the holy purpose.

More has been done for the circulation of religious Tracts, than in any former year. Sabbath School and Bible Class instruction have so received increased attention, and been followed with auspicious results. And besides those charities and efforts, which contemplate the welfare of our own community, it is believed there has been no diminution of feeling and exertion for those, who are ignorant of a Saviour in the ends of the earth, and afar off upon the sea.

A Mariners' Church, a costly and spacious edifice, is now rising in our principal sea-port, at which the means for scientific and religious instruction will be provided for that interesting and important class of citizens, who go down to the sea in ships, and do business on the great waters. The defective returns from our churches exhibit a little less than 8000 members, and the additions for the year not far from 600. On the supposition that four fifths of the communicants in the Congregational churches of Maine are connected with the different County Conferences—which is probably very near the fact—our churches contain but about 10,000 members. And "what are these among so many?" What are 10,000 among a population of 300,000 or 400,000? A little band indeed, in the proportion of 1 to 30 or 40! Suppose other denominations, who hold the Head, to number collectively twice as many as ours, the proportion of professors of religion to the whole population will be about as 1 to 10 or 15. Or if we double the number, they are still as a grain of mustard seed—a little leaven which needs to possess powerful and active virtue, in order to leaven the whole mass.

The smallness of our number, as well as our poverty and dispersed condition, will charitably account to our brethren in other portions of the country for the little which we have accomplished in helping forward the benevolent operations of the day. We cannot if we would, raise our \$100,000 on a pressing emergency. We are obliged from the necessity of our circumstances, to act on a humble scale. But our very poverty & weakness furnish in themselves the strongest possible motive to exertion.—They show the necessity of putting forth our utmost efforts, that the "little one may become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation." Means are in operation, which, with God's blessing, will produce this result.—According to the returns which have been received, our churches during the year, have gained more than one-tenth; and the converting grace of God has prepared others to come within her pale, whom she will shortly welcome to her bosom, and privileges, in such numbers, as to render that gain equal to at least one-sixth of their whole number. If these smiles of the Great Head of the Church on the prayers and exertions of his children, should be continued, the amazing disproportion between the church and the world will be annihilated. Our city will not sit solitary, but be full of people. Our conference system is admirably adapted to promote a consummation so devoutly to be wished. Let its spirit

